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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANJUL 000652

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [GA](#)
SUBJECT: GAMBIAN PRESIDENT APPOINTS NEW CABINET

REF: BANJUL 648

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Classified By: CDA C. Patricia Alsup, Reason 1.4 (b and d)

(U) 1. On October 19, only one day after dissolving his cabinet, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh named ministers for all but four cabinet positions. Most of the announced appointments represent re-appointments of ministers to the positions they held before the cabinet's dissolution. There are two ministers new to the cabinet and one minister has moved from one department to another. The new list of ministers is as follows:

-- Vice President and Secretary of State for Women's Affairs: Mrs. Isatou NJIE-SAIDY (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Finance and Economic Affairs: Mr. Mousa Gibril Bala GAYE (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Health and Social Welfare: Dr. Tamsir MBOWE (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Communication, Information, and Technology: Mrs. Neneh Macdouall GAYE (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Forestry and the Environment : Captain (rtd) Edward SINGHATEY (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Interior: Col. (rtd) Baboucarr JATTA (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Local Governments and Lands: Mr. Ismalia SAMBOU (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Youth, sports and Religious Affairs: Mr. Sheikh Omar FAYE (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Education: Mrs. Fatou Lamin FAYE (reappointment)

-- Secretary of State for Fisheries and Natural Resources: Captain (rtd) Yankuba TOURAY (formerly SOS for Agriculture)

-- Secretary of State for Agriculture: Mr. Kanja SANNEH (new to the cabinet)

-- Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: Mr. Maba JOBE (new to the cabinet)

12. (U) The four ministries for which no Secretary has yet been named are the Department of State for Justice, the Department of State for Trade, Industry, and Employment, the Department of State for Tourism and Culture, and the

Department of State for Works, Construction, and
Infrastructure.

13. (U) Mr. Maba Jobe, the new SOS for Foreign Affairs is a retired army Major, who was Commander of the Army under the Jawara administration and later deployed by that administration to the Gambian High Commission in London as First Secretary. Following the 1994 coup that brought Jammeh to power, Jobe was appointed The Gambia's High Commissioner to Nigeria where he served until 2001 when he resigned to go into private business. The new SOS for Agriculture, Mr. Kanja Sanneh, until his appointment was a senior official at the well-respected National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI).

14. (U) The two former cabinet members who have been replaced -- Lamin Kaba Bajo, former SOS for Foreign Affairs, and Bai Mass Taal, former SOS for Fisheries and Waterworks, are not expected to receive new appointments. Mambury Njie, who had been Secretary General, has also been replaced. The new Secretary-General is the former Secretary to the Cabinet,

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Mrs. Ya-Elli Harding.

15. (C) COMMENT. There were few surprises in the cabinet appointments, though we had expected more new faces. One surprise was the failure to reappoint Susan Wafa OOGO, former SOS for Tourism, along with all of the other reappointments given her long-standing (from childhood) friendship with President Jammeh. She was widely believed to be untouchable and may yet be reappointed. Given all of the reappointments, it seems very likely that the dissolution of the cabinet was primarily a show of power by Jammeh. Post does not believe that this cabinet shuffle will result in any policy change on the part of the Jammeh administration. We await word on appointments to the four remaining cabinet positions. The Attorney General/ SOS for Justice appointment will be particularly important given the several high profile trials

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pending as well as the upcoming National Assembly elections.
END COMMENT.
ALSUP